IMT Nuremberg Archives

H – 991

International Court of Justice

Com. A.
Take 4 Pg. 1.
Meehan
27 June 1946.
Sievers.

OR

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

27 June, 1946.

COMMISSIONER:

Captain Joseph Tubridy.

THE S. S.

(THE COMMISSION CONVENED AT 1200 HOURS.)

WOLFRAM SIEVERS, a witness, took the stand and testified as follows:

BY THE COMMISSIONER:

Will the witness stand, raise his right hand and repeat after me:

I swear by God, the Almighty and Omniscient, that I will speak the pure truth and will withhold and add nothing.

(The witness repeated the oath.)

Q What is your name?

A Wolfram Sievers.

Q You may sit down.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Dr. Pelckmann, willyou please state what you want to prove by this witness?

1

H0991-0003

DR. PELCKMANN: I called the witness, Sievers, in order to interrogate him concerning the constructions and the tasks of the Ahnenerbe organization, which is the Ancestral Heritage Institute and to show the relationship that this organization held to the Dr. Rascha group; also to show that this Ahnenerbe did not know of the biological experiments of the group by Dr. Rascha performed on concentration camp inmates.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: You may proceed.

BY DR. PELCKMANN:

Q Were you the Reichs manager of the Ahnenerbe organization?

A Yes, since the foundation of the institute on 1 July, 1935.

Q Since when have you been a member of the SS?

A Since the end of 1935?

Q How did you happen to become a member of the SS?

A Taking over the management of the Ahnenerbe did not require membership in the SS. At first, I did not think of becoming an SS member, but at the end of 1935 Himmler asked me why I was not a member of the SS. I told him that my interest had always only concerned itself with cultural subjects and that I had not taken over the management of the Ahnenerbe in order to serve in a storm troop organization, for which I did not care. Himmler told me that this was not necessary and that he would take me on his personal staff. I asked him for a short time to consider this and then entered his personal staff as an SS man. In the course of the year, I was promoted to Standartenfuhrer. In 1941 I was drafted for service in the Waffen SS and held in the Waffen SS the rank of SS Rifleman.

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H0991-0004

Com. A.
Take 4 Pg. 3.
Meehan
27 June
Sievers.

Q Were you drafted into the Waffen SS because they wanted to keep you employed in a civilian position in the Reich and to prevent you from being drafted for military front service.

A No, in 1939 I received a draft order into the army, but it was cancelled by Himmler. I was told that I should see to getting a proper substitutde because I was then going to be given over to the troop and this did take place in 1941. While I was in training both of my representatives or deputies had a fatal accidende and thereupon I was recalled.

Q You knew of course that the medical experiments of Dr. Rascha had been placed upon the conscience of the entire SS and the Ahnenerbe, therefore, it is necessary for us to discuss the legal construction and composition of this organization?

What was the legal construction of the Ahnenerbe and what relation did it hold to the SS?

A The Ahnenerbe was an organization that had been registered with the district Court - Berlin center. The relationship to the SS was solely so because Himmler was the trustee of the Ahnenerbe. In 1937 Himmler became president and chairman of this registered organization and in 1942 the Ahnenerbe became a department in the personal staff of the Reichsfuehrer, but its structure as a registered association was not touched by this fact.

Q What was the reason for placing the Ahnenerbe in the personal staff of the central office in 1942?

A A regulation concerning saving measures that were made necessary by the war. In order to maintain ~~xxxxxx~~ intellectual research that

H0991-0005

had to a great extent been stopped and then by the Goebbels decree stopped entirely.

Q Who was the Director of the Ahnenerbe?

A Himmler was the president and chairman of this registered organization. Dr. Walter Wust of Munich was a trustee and the scientifically named registered head of the association. I was responsible for the administration.

Q What were the tasks and aims of the Ahnenerbe?

A It concerned itself with the research of the philosophy, cultural history and geography of the European nations on a scientific basis.

Q Does "European" mean the same thing as the word "Nordic" used in National Socialism terminology?

A No, there is no connection. The word "European" was a term first used in the nineteenth century, a biological term expressing scientifically the biological relationship of the European people. It is not a racial term because there has been no pure races in Europe since time immemorial.

Q Was racial research carried on in the Ahnenerbe, or was the research carried on to strengthen the psychological ideals of National Socialist ideology?

A No, racial research was accepted and the Ahnenerbe was not requested or demanded to do any training or propaganda work. The scienfic results of the research in the Ahnenerbe is shown in about one hundred publications, Men of international science could examine these documents at any time.

H0991-0006

Com. A.
Take 4 Pg. 5
Meehan
27 June
Sievers.

Q Was the research that was carried on concerning language, culture and history of people also extended to the Slavic race?

A Yes, otherwise the research would have remained incomplete for the Slavic racial group is an ~~excellent~~ essential component part of the European group of races.

Q I only refer to thi point because it has been alleged that Himmler in a speech, which he held just before the eastern campaign began, said that thirty million Slavs would have to be exterminated. Have you ever had any talks with Himmler that would lead you to conclude that this was his attitude?

A I do not know the speech mentioned, but I remember a conversation I had with Himmler at Easter time in 1942, which ought to show me what his attitude was. In this talk he said to me that the Slavic group of nations was closely related to us, for instance the White Russians and he said that it must be our concern to try to win the Slavic nations for us in case of any controversy with the yellow races. He said that the settling of a controversy with the yellow race might ~~begin~~ become within a very short time the decisive question of destiny for Europe.

Q How did the Ahnenerbe carry out its research work?

A Research work was made possible: (1) By donating research scholarships; (2) By the Institution of about fifty research departments that is research institutions; (3) By means of work groups in cooperation with Universities and Reich institutions; (4) By supporting research expeditions; (5) By erecting work shops and laboratories; (6) By building up special libraries that concerned themselves with special fields of work and by

5

H0991-0007

founding
~~xxxxxx~~ a central library; 7 By compiling or work and making it the work of University thesis and studies; (8) By carrying out congress and work conferences; and (9) By making the publication of scientific work possible.

Q You were the collaborators and members of the Ahnenerbe?

A The active members were the 50 heads of Departments, about 12 correspondence members and about 1,000 participating members who could take part or participate in our organization and arrangements at a cheaper price and who also of course had to pay their annual dues.

Q Was it only possible to become a member or collaborator of the Ahnenerbe if one was a member of the SS group?

A No. One of the conditions for membership in the Ahnenerbe was neither membership in the SS or the party.

Q Did you not become a member of the SS automatically when you entered the Ahnenerbe?

A No, apart from the women, that would never have been possible because members of the Ahnenerbe were also foreigners, clergymen and people who were effected by the Nurnberg law and were restricted in their possibility of research and people who were rejected by the party because of their political convictions.

Q If members did belong to the SS, were they regular SS leaders or honorary SS leaders?

A The majority of them were honorary SS leaders.

H0991-0008

Q You said that originally you were drafted for army service during the war. Were the other members and collaborators drafted for army service and not for SS service?

A The majority were drafted for army service.

Q Did the collaborators of the Ahnenerbe receive any National Socialist directives or were they handicapped in their work by National Socialistic requirements?

A The only condition for membership of the collaborators was for their scientific ability and efficiency. Their research work could be carried out entirely independant from any rules of dogmatic principles and they were also given free will in their research work.

Q How were the missions of the Ahnenerbe financed?

A There was the Ahnenerbe Foundation that had been recognized and approved by the Minister of the Interior and by the Minister of Education, the funds that the association received came primarily from the German research organizations, membership dues, state means and endowments.

Q Will you please tell us very briefly what Himmler's reasons were for building up such an enormous research organization?

A Himmler did not state his reasons personally. I can only here give my own opinion. First of all he had a personal interest in scientific research.

MR. ELWYN JONES: I feel that I should object to this evidence unless you think it will be helpful. If the witness never discussed the

H0991-0009

matter with Himmler it seems rather unhelpful that we should have the benefit of his own impressions.

DR. PELCKMANN: I should like to ask the witness then whether he can say from personal remarks with Himmler, in his personal conversation with Himmler, any remarks which would lead him to have any thoughts or opinions relative to Himmler's ideas, even though he did not put it down himself.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: We would have to have Himmler's ideas and not the impression of what the witness thinks.

DR. PELKMANN: That is why I asked the witness if he could say from talks he had with Himmler what his talks and opinions were concerning the Ahnenerbe?

THE WITNESS: Yes, first of all, his own personal interest in research work, 2nd, Himmler said that research work was not carried on sufficiently in his opinion by the party and the state. This was expressed by the lack of any central organization in 1933 for such purposes, besides just playing Messina to certain groups. He was also personally interested in extending that scope and influence of research. His aim was to have the collaborators of the Ahnenerbe decentralized as a group at a University. Therefore, it was a condition that the heads of the departments of the Ahnenerbe establish themselves as field officers at the University if they had not been appointed professors at the University.

BY DR. PELKMANN:

Q What was the position of the department managed by Dr. Rascha at the Ahnenerbe?

8

H0991-0010

Com. A.
Take 3-Pg. 9
Meehan
27 June
Sievers.

A Dr. Rascha's department did not belong to the Ahnenerbe, it belonged to the institute for purposes of military scientific research.

Q What other departments belonged to the institute of Wehrwiesenschafthehe Zwech Forschung?

A Besides Dr. Rascha, the department of Proffessor Dr. Hirsch; Dr. Mey/ of the Interbiological department; the Military Scientific Research Department of Prof. Brandt; the mathematical department manned by the mathematician Dr. Bose and the gynecology department of Dr. Brucher.

Q What was the relationship that this military scientific research department had to the Ahnenerbe?

A In order to save the expense of a director of its own, Himmler amalgamated this department to the Ahnenerbe in 1942.

Q How was the institute for military scientific research helped by the Ahnenerbe?

A By procuring for this department the necessary funds and materials required by it.

Q Who was the manager or director for the institute for this research work?

A The institute had no scientific director. It was directly subordinate to Himmler and not to the scientific director of the Ahnenerbe. The different heads of the departments were directly responsible for their own work to those who had given the missions to the heads of the Department. Himmler did not want any intermediary offices used here.

H0991-0011

Q Who gave the research tasks to this institute?

A Himmler, the air force, the Reichs Research Counsel, the army and industry.

Q What was the relationship or the extent of the administrative work of the Department of Rascha as compared with the administrative work of the entire Ahnenerbe?

A It was just a small fraction of it -- 2% to 3% perhaps if expressed in numbers.

MR. ELWYN JONES: I would like to ask you the object of this line of investigation. As yet, there has been no reference made by the Prosecution to these matters. I would appreciate it if the counsel for defense would throw some light on this testimony. It seems to be interesting, but not very relative.

DR. PELKMANN: I want to prove here that the research work carried on bythe Ahnenerbe was, as the witness has just stated, up to 97% completely legal and that Dr. Rascha's department as such and his experiments had nothing to do with the Ahnenerbe association. I hope to show that if I prove that Rascha's experiments only happened to fall within the scope of the Ahnenerbe by chance and such experiments do not indict the entire SS as was stated in the trial brief. In the speech made by Major Farr on Page 1648 of the German record, it says expressly that these biological experiments indict the entire SS.

H0991-0012

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Could you have your line of questioning directed toward the fact that these experiments fell to the SS by chance?

DR. PELKMANN: Yes.

BY DR. PELKMANN:

Q Did you have any possibility of being inside with respect to the relationship or the planning of the methods and the carrying out of the scientific research work of the Military Scientific Department?

A No.

Q Did you have any influence concerning the execution and planning of Dr. Rascha's experiments?

A No.

Q Or anyone else within the Ahnenerbe?

A No one else in the Ahnenerbe had any influence on these questions and matters as they were handled by Himmler and Rascha themselves.

Q Was the work of the Military Institute of Research known generally.

A That was impossible because the work carried on here was secret and concerned top secret matters only and only the persons directly concerned with the work knew anything of it.

Q To whom did the report go concerning the research work of the institute?

A The reports went directly from the different heads of the departments to Himmler or to the person who had sent the task to the department.

Q Does this also apply especially to Dr. Rascha's reports concerning his experiments?

H0991-0013

Com. A.
Take 3-Pg. 12.
Meehan
27 June
Sievers.

A Yes, all essential questions were discussed immediately with Himmler and he received his instructions from Hitler direct. Rascha's experiments first began to be carried out at the order of the airforce and Rascha himself was a director of the Air Force.

Q As far as you know, was there any talk that inmates of camps were to be placed at their disposal for human experiments?

H0991-0014

A Yes, this was agreed at that time between Rascha and Himmler. The experiments, however, began on volunteers of the airforce. By reason of a Fuehrer order that decreed that from now on volunteers of camps were to be used or criminals who had received the death sentence, Himmler then began to order the carrying out of these experiments.

Q Do you know whether any inmates volunteered for these human experiments of Dr. ~~Xxxxx~~ Rascha's?

A Yes, Rascha once said that more applications were received by him than he needed. And moreover, a part of the inmates who had volunteered for these experiments were released entirely from the camp and let free.

DR. PELCKMANN: I have no further questions.

CROSS - EXAMINATION

BY MR. ELWYN JONES:

Q Who were these 50 heads of departments which belonged to the Ahnenerbe?

A The majority of these people were scientists and university professors.

Q And what departments did they head?

A These departments were within the scope of the Ahnenerbe.

Q What was the~~xx~~ relation of the Ahnenerbe and the Reich Research Department?

A There was no relation. Since 1943 I myself was the deputy of the Assistant Director of the Board of Directors of the Reasearch Counsel.

Q Does the name Mentzel convey anything to you?

A Yes, Mentzel was the director of the ~~xxx~~ Administrative Board of Directors of the Reich Research Department.

Q And you yourself were connected with that department, weren't you?

H0991-0015

A I had been Mentzel's ~~representative~~ representative since 1943.

Q Mentzel was handling the financial matters of these hideous experiments on human beings that the SS was carrying out, was he not?

A No, these experiments were financed by the Reich Research Counsel.

Q Would it surprise you to know that Mentzel wrote to the Reich Minister of Finance ~~in~~ in March, 1943, with regard to the use of these persons on experiments? I am referring to the document, Commissioner, PS-002, US-469.

A I was not, as yet, a member of the research department in March, 1943, and I also do not know this letter nor the contents of this letter. Does it refer to the Institute of Scientific Research? Of course, I don't believe so.

Q I am afraid that I have not got the German original with me, but it reads as follows. It is addressed to the Reich Minister of Finance and it reads as follows:

"In regard to your correspondence of the 19th of December, I finally take the following position:

"The Surgeon General, SS and Police, in a personal discussion, told me that the budget claim which he looks after is used primarily in the pure military sector of the Waffen SS."

A Now I know what this refers to.

Q Then it says, at the end of the letter:

"I cannot object, therefore, on the part of the Reichs Experimental Counsel against the budget claims of the ~~Surgeon~~ Surgeon General, SS and Police."

A May I answer?

Q Yes please.

A This letter evidently refers to negotiations carried on between the Surgeon General, SS, and the ~~General~~ Doctor Grawitz. I don't know the research work that was carried on there. The Institute for Military Scientific Research, of course,

H0991-0016

had nothing to do with the Surgeon General, SS and police. Therefore I am sorry that I cannot give any testimony here because I lack the necessary knowledge.

Q You were informed, were you, as to the negotiations between Himmler and Rascha for these human experiments?

A In general, but not in detail.

Q You knew that they were carried out in Dachau?

A Yes.

Q What was the personnel used to carry out these experiments? SS men, were they not?

A Do you mean as collaborators or as the persons to be experimented on?

Q You know perfectly well that the persons who were experimented on were detainees in the camp, and not SS men. You know the answer to my question quite clearly.

A Dr. Rascha was a surgeon of the airforce and his collaborators were all members of the airforce. They were all doctors of the airforce. All these experiments were carried on personally by Dr. Rascha with the assistance of Dr. Finke, a staff surgeon, and a man from the experimental station in Adlehof whose name I don't know.

Q These experiments were well known to your Institute, were they not?

A The task that had been set up was known as such, and that the mission was being carried out.

Q Do you know, for instance, that certain medical circles in Germany were decent enough and human enough to protest against these experiments?

A This raises the question of human experiments in general. All these experiments that afforded no other solution were being carried out on human beings in America as well as in other countries.

15

H0991-0017

Q I won't embark into a discussion with you upon that, but certain Christian, what Himmler calls Christian Medical Centers, were objecting to these medical experiments on humans for the German Luftwaffe, weren't they?

A Yes, but Himmler quelled the objection immediately with a very severe order.

Q He answered it by pulling Rascha out of the Luftwaffe and pushing him into the Waffen SS, didn't he?

A Yes, he was transferred to the SS.

Q And Himmler was asking for some of these experiments to be done for the SS. It wasn't a Luftwaffe affair, it was also for the benefit of the SS.

A After Rascha was transferred to the SS, as far as I know, the Airforce experiments were no longer carried out. Himmler 's idea then was indeed to make experiments inorder to create a therapy for the injuries which occurred in the East due to freezing. Many differences of opinion arose concerning these experiments. So far as I know, they were not carried out as Himmler ordered them to be.

Q But did you agree that Himmler transferred Rascha into the SS so that Himmler could protect Rascha from the indignities that some decent people in Germany -- if there are any decent people in Germany -- felt against these human experiments?

A I don't know the reasons that prevailed. Himmler and Rascha were very close friends and I did not know exactly what went on.

Q You were a close friend of Himmler's too,weren't you?

A Not at all.

Q You were his administrator for this remarkable experiment in Nazi Science, were you not?

A I am not a research worker. I am primarily a man concerned with administrative work. My profession is that of a publisher.

H0991-0018

Q Were you supplying the SS with the material for their propaganda to support the master race conceptions and such scientific myths as that?

A No.

Q Did you ever see any of the films connected with the Rascha experiments?

A No, I only heard that such a film was made.

Q The films were shown to the Airforce, were they not?

A Yes, but I was not present.

Q Were they shown to the SS?

A Not that I know of.

Q Do you, of your own personal knowledge, know what kind of films they were? Did they show human beings being submitted to these experiments?

A The title of the film was -- I cannot remember exactly,but the wording was somewhat as follows: "Concerning the Behavior of Persons at High Altitudes in Sub-level Pressure Chambers."

Q These first experiments, you said, were carried out in Dachau?

A Yes.

Q I take it that later the other concentration camps were used for these experiments, were they not?

A Rascha only worked at Dachau.

Q Where were the experiments on women carried out?

A I don't know.

Q Do you not know of the experiments on women or do you not know where they were carried out?

A I know nothing of experiments on women.

Q How did you come to know the Rascha experiments and were you brought into the confidence of the SS chiefs in regard to the other experiments which were being carried out?

H0991-0019

A Solely because Rascha's department was put under the administration of the Administrative Department of the Ahnenerbe as, I believe, I have already testified.

Q Who put up the money for Rascha?

A The airforce experiments were financed by the airforce.

Q And the SS experiments?

A They were paid for from Army funds.

Q How much?

A I cannot say in detail.

Q Did you yourself have any connection with the administrative details of this transaction?

A So far as requests were made for funds and material and put at the disposal of the department.

Q You, as a good SS man, would have no objection to taking part in these murders, did you?

A The question was not a decisive one, so far as I was concerned, because I had no jurisdiction to interfere because I was only concerned with administrative work.

Q But you were an essential cog in this machine, don't you see? Without little men like you in this murderous organization, the organization could not have worked, you know.

A As I have already testified, the entire framework of the Ahnenerbe was one of intellectual research.

Q I am not talking about the Ahnenerbe. I am talking about your personal part in connection with the Rascha experiments.

A As I testified previously my presence, or not being present, would not have played any importance at all concerning the very small percentage in relation to the amount of experiments that were carried out.

H0991-0020

Q How many people, do youx estimate, were murdered in connection with the Rascha and other experiments carried out under the guise of Nazi science?

A I cannot say because I had no insight to these matters.

MR. JONES: No further questions, sir.

CAPT. TUBRIDY: Do you wish to question in re-direct examination Dr. Pelckmann?

DR. PELCKMANN: No.

CAPT. TUBRIDY: Then the witness is excused and we will take a 10 minute recess.

The Commission adjourned at 1530 hours.

I certify that
The foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of WOLFRAM SIEVERS, taken on 27 June 1946.

Alice Mellon
Reporter (pp 1-12

Liliani A. Ahuna
Reporter (pp 13-18

COMMISSIONER:

Joseph F Tubridy

H0991-0021

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF TESTIMONY FOR THE DEFENSE OF ORGANIZATIONS, TAKEN BEFORE A COMMISSION APPOINTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNALPURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL DATED 13 MARCH 1946.

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Will the witness stand, raise his right hand and repeat after me:

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A Yes, since the foundation of the institute on 1 July, 1935.

Q Since when have you been a member of the SS?

A Since the end of 1935.

Q How did you happen to become a member of the SS?

H0991-0022

A Taking over the management of the Ahnenerbe did not require membership in the SS. At first, I did not think of becoming an SS member, bu' at the end of 1935 Himmler asked me why I was not a member of the SS. I told him that my interest had always only concerned itself with cultural subjects and that I had not taken over the management of the Ahnenerbe in order to serve in a storm troop organization, for which I did not care. Himmler told me that this was not necessary and that he would take me on his personal staff. I asked him for a short time to consider this and then entered his personal staff as an SS man. In the course of the year, I was promoted to Standartenfuehrer. In 1941 I was drafted for service in the Waffen SS and held in the Waffen SS the rank of the SS Rifleman.

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Q What was the reason for placing the Ahnenerbe in the personal staff of the central office in 1942?

H0991-0023

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A I do not know the speech mentioned, but I remember a conversation I

H0991-0024

had with Himmler at Easter time in 1942, which ought to show me what his attitude was. In this talk he said to me that the Slavic group of nations was closely related to us, for instance the White Russians and he said that it must be our concern to try to win the Slavic nations for us in case of any controversy with the yellow races. He said that the settling of a controversy with the yellow race might become within a very short time the decisive question of destiny for Europe.

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H0991-0025

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A The majority of them were honorary SS leaders.

H0991-0026

Q. You said that originally you were drafted for army service during the war. Were the other members and collaborators drafted for army service and not for SS service?

A. The majority were drafted for army service.

Q. Did the collaborators of the Ahnenerbe receive any National Socialist directives or were they handicapped in their work by National Socialistic requirements?

A. The only condition for membership of the collaborators was for their scientific ability and efficiency. Their research work could be carried out entirely independent from any rules of dogmatic principles and they were also given free will in their research work.

Q. How were the missions of the Ahnenerbe financed?

A. There was the Ahnenerbe Foundation that had been recognized and approved by the Minister of the Interior and by the Minister of Education, the funds that the association received came primarily from the German research organizations, membership dues, state means and endowments.

Q. Will you please tell us very briefly what Himmler's reasons were for building up such an enormous research organization?

A. Himmler did not state his reasons personally. I can only here give my own opinion. First of all he had a personal interest in scientific research.

MR. ELWYN JONES: I fell that I should object to this evidence unless you think it will be helpful. If the witness never discussed the matter with Himmler it seems rather unhelpful that we should have the benefit of his own impressions.

DR. PELCKMANN: I should like to ask the witness then whether he can say from personal remarks with Himmler, in his personal conversation with Himmler, any remarks which would lead him to have any thoughts or opinions relative to Himmler's ideas, even though he did not put it down himself.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: We would have to have Himmler's ideas and not the impression of the witness.

DR. PELKMANN: That is why I asked the witness if he could say from talks

H0991-0027

he had with Himmler what his talks and opinions were concerning the Ahnenerbe?

THE WITNESS: Yes, first of all, his own personal interest in research work, 2nd, Himmler said that research work was not carried on sufficiently in his opinion by the party and the state. This was expressed by the lack of any central organization in 1933 for such purposes, besides just playing Messina to certain groups. He was also personally interested in extending that scope and influence of research. His aim was to have the collaborators of the Ahnenerby decentralized as a group at a University. Therefore, it was a condition that the heads of the departments of the Ahnenerbe establish themselves as field officers at the University if they had not been appointed professors at the University.

BY DR. PELKMANN:

Q. What was the position of the department managed by Dr. Rascha at the Ahnenerbe?

A. Dr. Rascha's department did not belong to the Ahnenerbe, it belonged to the institute for purposes of military scientific research.

Q. What other departments belonged to the institute of Wehwiesenschaftlehe Zwech Forschung?

A. Besides Dr. Rascha, the department of Proffessor Dr. Hirsch; Dr. Mey of the Interbiological department; the Military Scientific Research Department of Prof. Brandt; the mathematical department manned by the mathematician Dr. Bose, and the gynecology department of Dr. Brucher.

Q. What was the relationship that this military scientific research department had to the Ahnenerbe?

A. In order to save the expense of a director of its own, Himmler amalgamated this department to the Ahnenerbe in 1942.

Q. How was the institute for military scientific research helped by the Ahnenerbe?

A. By procuring for this department the necessary funds and materials required by it.

Q. Who was the manager or director for the institute for this research work?

H0991-0028

A. The institute had no scientific director. It was directly subordinate to Himmler and not to the scientific director of the Ahnenerbe. The different heads of the departments were directly responsible for their own work to those who had given the missions to the heads of the Department. Himmler did not want any intermediary offices used here.

Q. Who gave the research tasks to this institute?

A. Himmler, the air force, the Reichs Research Counsel, the army and industry.

Q. What was the relationship or the extent of the administrative work of the Department of Rascha as compared with the administrative work of the entire Ahnenerbe?

A. It was just a small fraction of it -- 2% ro 3% perhaps if expressed in numbers.

MR. ELWYN JONES: I would like to ask you the object of this line of investigation. As yet, there has been no reference made by the Prosecution to these matters. I would appreciate it if the counsel for defense would throw some light on this testimony. It seems to be interesting, but not very relative.

DR. PELKMANN: I want to prove here that the research work carried on by the Ahnenerbe was, as the witness has just stated, up to 97% completely legal and that Dr. Rascha's department as such and his experiments had nothing to do with the Ahnenerbe association. I hope to show that if I prove that Rascha's experiments only happened to fall within the scope of the Ahnenerbe by chance and such experiments do not indict the entire SS as was stated in the trial brief. In the speech made by Major Farr on page 1648 of the German record, it says expressly that these biological experiments indict the entire SS.

CAPTAIN TUBRIDY: Could you have your line of questioning directed toward the fact that these experiments fell to the SS by chance?

DR. PELKMANN: Yes.

BY DR. PELKMANN:

Q. Did you have any possibility of being inside with respect to the relationship or the planning of the methods and the carrying out of the

H0991-0029

scientific research work of the Military Scientific Department?

A. No.

Q. Did you have any influence concerning the execution and planning of Dr. Rascha's experiments?

A. No.

Q. Or anyone else within the Ahnenerbe?

A. No one else in the Ahnenerbe had any influence on these questions and matters as they were handled by Himmler and Rascha themselves.

Q. Was the work of the Military Institute of Research known generally.

A. That was impossible because the work carried on here was secret and concerned top secret matters only and only the persons directly concerned with the work knew anything of it.

Q. To whom did the report go concerning the research work of the institute?

A. The reports went directly from the different heads of the departments to Himmler or to the person who had sent the task to the department.

Q. Does this also apply especially to Dr. Rascha's reports concerning his experiments?

A. Yes, all essential questions were discussed immediately with Himmler and he received his instructions from Hitler direct. Rascha's experiments first began to be carried out at the order of the airforce and Rascha himself was a director of the Air Force.

Q. As far as you know, was there any talk that inmates of camps were to be placed at their disposal for human experiments?

H0991-0030

A. Yes, this was agreed at that time between Rascha and Himmler. The experiments, however, began on volunteers of the airforce. By reason of a Fuherer order that decreed that from now on volunteers of camps were to be used or criminals who had received the death sentence, Himmler then began to order the carrying out of these experiments.

Q. Do you know whether any inmates volunteered for these human experiments of Dr. Rascha's ?

A. Yes, Rascha once said that more applications were received by him than he needed. And moreover, a part of the inmates who had volunteered for these experiments were released entirely from the camp and let free.

DR. FELCKMANN: I have no further questions.

CROSS EXAMINATION

BY MR. ELWYN JONES:

Q. Who were these 5 heads of departments which belonged to the Ahnenerbe

A. The majority of these people were scientists and university professors.

Q. And what departments did they head ?

A. These departments were within the scope of the Ahnenerbe.

Q. What was the relation of the relation of the Ahnenerbe and the Reich Research Department ?

A. There was no relation. Since 1943 I myself was the deputy of the Assistant Director of the Board of Directors of the Research Counsel.

Q. Does the name Mentzel convey anything to you ?

A. Yes, Mentzel was the director of the Administrative Board of Directors of the Reich Research Department.

Q. And you yourself were connected with that department, weren't you ?

A. I had been Mentzel's representative since 1943.

Q. Mentzel was handling the financial matters of these hideous experiments on human beings that the SS was carrying out, was he not ?

A. No, these experiments were financed by the Reich Reserach Counsel.

Q. Would it surprise you to know that Mentzel wrote to the Reich Minister of Finance in March. 1943, with regard to the use of these persons on experiments ? I am referring to the document, Commissioner, PS-002, US-469

H0991-0031

A. I was not, as yet, a member of the research department in March, 1943, and I also do not know this letter nor the contents of this letter. Does it refer to the Institute of Scientific Research ? Of course, I don't believe so

Q. I am afraid that I have not got the German original with me, but it reads as follows. It is addressed to the Reich Minister of Finance and it reads as follows :

"In regard to your correspondence of the 19th of December, I finally take the folliwing position :

"The Surgeon General, SS and Police, in a personal discussion, told me that the budget claim which he looks after is used primarily in the pure military sector of the Waffen SS."

A. Now I know what this refers to.

Q. Then it says, at the end of the letter :

"I cannot object, therefore, on the part of the Reichs Experimental Counsel against the budget claims of the Surgeon General, SS and Police."

A. May I answer ?

Q. Yes please.

A. This letter evidently refers to negotiations carried on between the Surgeon General, SS and the General Doctor Grawitz. I don't know the research work that was carried on there. The Institute for Military Scientific Research of course had nothing to do with the Surgeon General, SS and Police. Therefor I am sorry that I cannot give any testimony here because I lack the necessary knowledge.

Q. You were informed, were you, as to the negotiations between Himmler and Rascha for these human experiments ?

A. In general , but not in detail.

Q. You knew that they were carried out in Dachau ?

A. Yes.

Q. What was the personnel used to carry out these experiments ? SS men, were they not ?

A. Do you mean as collaborators or as the persons to be experimented on ?

Q. You know perfectly well that the persons who were experimanted on were detainees in the camp, and not SS men. You know the answer to my question quite clearly.

H0991-0032

A. Dr. Rasch was a surgeon of the airforce and his collaborators were all members of the airforce. They were all doctors of the airforce. All these experiments were carried on personally by Dr. Rascha with the assistance of Dr. Finke, a staff surgeon, and a man from the experimental station in Adlehof whose name I don't know.

Q. These experiments were well known to your Institute, were they not ?

A. The tasks that had been set up was known as such, and that the mission was being carried out.

Q. Do you know, for instance, that certain medical circles in Germany were decent enough and human enough to protest against these experiments ?

A. This raises the question of human experiments in general. All these experiments that afforded no other solution were being carried out on human beings in America as well as in other countries.

H0991-0033

Q I won't embark into a discussion with you upon that, but certain Christian, what Himmler calls Christian Medical Centers, were objecting to these medical experiments on humans for the German Luftwaffe, weren't they?

A Yes, but Himmler quelled the objection immediately with a very severe order.

Q He answered it by pulling Rascha out of the Luftwaffe and pushing him into the Waffen SS, didn't he?

A Yes, he was transferred to the SS.

Q And Himmler was asking for some of these experiments to be done for the SS. It wasn't a Luftwaffe affair, it was also for the benefit of the SS.

A After Rascha was transferred to the SS, as far as I know, the Airforce experiments were no longer carried out. Himmler's idea then was indeed to make experiments in order to create a therapy for the injuries which occurred in the East due to freezing. Many differences of opinion arose concerning these experiments. So far as I know, they were not carried out as Himmler ordered them to be.

Q But did you agree that Himmler transferred Rascha into the SS so that Himmler could protect Rascha from the indignities that some decent people in Germany - if there are any decent people in Germany -- felt against these human experiments?

A I don't know the reasons that prevailed. Himmler and Rascha were very close friends and I did not know exactly what went on.

Q You were a close friend of Himmler's too, weren't you?

A Not at all.

Q You were his administrator for this remarkable experiment in Nazi Science, were you not?

A I am not a research worker. I am primarily a man concerned with administrative work. My profession is that of a publisher.

Q Were you supplying the SS with the material for their propaganda to support the master race conceptions and such scientific myths as that?

A No.

Q Did you ever see any of the films connected with the Rascha experiments?

H0991-0034

A No, I only heard that such a film was made.

Q The films were shown to the Airforce, were they not?

A Yes, but I was not present.

Q Were they shown to the SS?

A Not that I know of.

Q Do you, of your own personal knowledge, know what kind of films they were? Did they show human beings being submitted to these experiments?

A The title of the film was -- I cannot remember exactly, but the wording was somewhat as follows: "Concerning the Behavior of Persons at High Altitudes in Sub-level Pressure Chambers."

Q These first experiments, you said, were carried out in Dachau?

A Yes.

Q I take it that later the other concentration camps were used for these experiments, were they not?

A Rascha only worked at Dachau.

Q Where were the experiments on women carried out?

A I don't know.

Q Do you not know of the experiments on women or do you not know where they were carried out?

A I know nothing of experiments on women.

Q How did you come to know the Rascha experiments and were you brought into the confidence of the SS chiefs in regard to the other experiments which were being carried out?

A Solely because Rascha's department was put under the administration of the Administrative Department of the Ahnenerbe as, I believe, I have already testified.

Q Who put up the money for Rascha?

A The airforce experiments were financed by the airforce.

Q And the SS experiments?

A They were paid for from Army funds.

Q How much?

A I cannot say in detail.

Q Did you yourself have any connection with the administrative details of this transaction?

H0991-0035

A So far as requests were made for funds and material and put at the disposal of the department.

Q You, as a good SS man, would have no objection to taking part in these murders, did you?

A The question was not a decisive one, so far as I was concerned, because I had no jurisdiction to interfere because I was only concerned with administrative work.

Q But you were an essential cog in this machine, don't you see? Without little men like you in this murderous organization, the organization could not have worked, you know.

A As I have already testified, the entire framework of the Ahnenerbe was one of intellectual research.

Q I am not talking about the Ahnenerbe. I am talking about your personal part in connection with the Rascha experiments.

A As I testified previously my presence, or not being present, would not have played any importance at all concerning the very small percentage in relation to the amount of experiments that were carried out.

Q How many people, do you estimate, were murdered in connection with the Rascha and other experiments carried out under the guise of Nazi science?

A I cannot say because I had no insight to these matters.

MR. JONES: No further questions, sir.

CAPT. TUBRIDY: Do you wish to question in re-direct examination Dr. Pelckmann?

DR. PELCKMANN: No.

CAPT. TUBRIDY: Then the witness is excused and we will take a 10 minute recess.

The Commission adjourned at 1530 hours.

I certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of the testimony of WOLFRAM SIEVERS, taken on 27 June 1946.

Alice Meehan
Reporter

Piilani A. Ahuna
Reporter

COMMISSIONER:

Joseph F. Tubridy